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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4716
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0959
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9731
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4209
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1665
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RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0529
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4442
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0797
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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000849

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA; TREASURY FOR OASIA:AJEWELL

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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: ILO READY FOR GOB ACTION ON COMMITMENTS

Classified By: Econoff TLManlowe for Reason 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) Summary: On June 20, immediately upon his return from the International Labor Conference (ILC), ILO Country Liaison Officer Richard Horsey requested a meeting with Labor Minister U Thaung to follow up on the commitments on forced labor made by the GOB in Geneva. Horsey singled out the USG statement at the Geneva meeting as among the most helpful in applying pressure for prompt regime action. End summary.

12. (C) On June 21, Richard Horsey, ILO Country Liaison Officer, told embofffs that on June 20 he requested a meeting with Labor Minister U Thaung, immediately upon his return to Rangoon from the International Labor Conference (ILC). Horsey has not yet received a reply, but expected he would have to travel to the new administrative capital of Naypyitaw for the meeting. Horsey also told us that the UN Resident Coordinator had been invited to a meeting next Monday in Naypyitaw with the Minister of Planning, one of the first non-ceremonial events in the capital for a foreign envoy.

13. (C) According to Horsey, to prove its commitment to addressing forced labor, the most important first step is for the GOB to establish a credible mechanism to handle labor complaints. Since civilian and military government officials at many levels throughout Burma now practice forced labor with impunity, he said, real progress would require a significant change in official behavior. For that, the ILO needs to see a tangible commitment and action by the top levels of national government. "We can't progress without it," Horsey said. The GOB released labor activist Su Su Nway during the ILC, but the release of Aye Myint, a lawyer imprisoned for exposing forced labor, and the suspension of an ongoing forced labor trial currently underway in Aungmye Thon, would help send a signal that the regime will follow through on its assurances in Geneva, Horsey said. He said that authorities missed a perfect opportunity when the judge, instead of dismissing the ongoing Aungmye Thon case, moved the

court date from June 21 to July 17-21.

¶4. (C) Horsey said that the U.S. representative's statement at the ILC was the most helpful, because it was well informed about current developments in Burma, and reflected thoughtful consideration of the circumstances. He expressed particular disappointment that ASEAN made no statement about Burma at the ILC.

¶5. (C) Comment: The regime released Su Su Nway and offered some last minute promises in Geneva to deflect international pressure for immediate ILO action against Burma. The ILO's response set firm deadlines for measurable follow-up actions (i.e., release Aye Myint and stop the ongoing Aunglan prosecution by the end of July 2006, and establish an effective forced labor complaint mechanism by the end of October 2006). The ILO Country Representative's next meeting with the Labor Minister may reveal whether the GOB intends to move forward on forced labor issues this year, or simply try new stalling tactics. Either way, the ILO clock is ticking. End comment.
STOLTZ